

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 00995 01 OF 02 061404Z

46

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PRS-01 PA-04 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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FOR NEA/PAB/PECK; USIA FOR INA/GILBERT; FROM GRESHAM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BD

SUBJECT: BD PRESS & PERIODICAL UPDATE

FOLLOWING IS CURRENT CHECKLIST AND BACKGROUND SUMMARIES
PRINCIPAL BD NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS AS REQUESTED YOUR OFF-INF
OF FEBRUARY 5 WHICH ARRIVED DACCA FEBRUARY 26 (HENCE AM CABLING).
ALSO REFER YOU TO PRESS AND PERIODICAL SUMMARY CONTAINED IN UP-
DATED COUNTRY DATA PAPER TRANSMITTED TO USIA NOVEMBER 29, 1973.

I. ENGLISH DAILIES

A. BANGLADESH OBSERVER (GOVERNMENT ADMINISTERED)

1. CIRCULATION NOW UP TO 42,000

2. A. ADMINISTRATOR: ABDUL GHANI HAZARI, 45, HONORS GRAD CALCUTTA
UNIV., WELL-KNOWN POET AND WRITER, CONSIDERED NON-POLITICAL,
PREVIOUSLY MANAGING EDITOR OF PRECURSOR PAKISTAN OBSERVER.

B. EDITOR: OBAIDUL HUQ, 60, HONORS GRAD CALCUTTA U., BACKGROUND
IN FILMS AS WRITER-DIRECTOR, PREVIOUS JOINT EDITOR PAKISTAN
OBSERVER. ALSO NON-POLITICAL.

3. PREDECESSOR PAKISTAN OBSERVER (FOUNDED 1950) AND ASSETS
(OWNED BY HAMIDUL HUQ CHOUDHURY, NOW IN EXILE IN UK, DEPRIVED OF
CITIZENSHIP FOR COLLABORATIONIST ACTIVITIES DURING WAR) WERE
SEIZED BY BDG AFTER INDEPENDENCE. PAPER HAS SINCE BECOME HACK AL
MOUTHPIECE IN EDITORIAL COMMENT. NEWS LEANS HEAVILY ON AL POLITICAL
ACTIVITIES AND SLOGANEERING, EULOGIZING MUJIBUR RAHMAN; FOREIGN

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PAGE 02 DACCA 00995 01 OF 02 061404Z

NEWS (ESPECIALLY LEADS) DRAWN FREQUENTLY FROM TASS, APN THROUGH

EASTERN NEWS AGENCY; SCATTERED USAGE OF UPI, AP, REUTERS AND AFP THROUGH BSS (BANGLADESH SANGBAD SANGSTHA-"BD NEWS ORGANIZATION").

B. MORNING NEWS (GOVERNMENT ADMINISTERED)

1. CIRCULATION 20,000.
2. EDITOR ADMINISTRATOR: SHAMSUL HUDA, 40, B.A. RANGPUR COLLEGE, FORMER AWAMI STUDENT LEAGUE ACTIVIST, SUB-EDITOR BENGALI DAILY ITTEFAQ, NEWS EDITOR BSS, PRESENT POSITION SINCE MID-1973.
3. PREVIOUSLY CONTROLLED BY PAKISTAN NATIONAL PRESS TRUST (51 PCT) JOINTLY WITH WEST PAKISTAN INVESTMENT HOUSES. ORIGINALLY A CALCUTTA PAPER IT MOVED TO DACCA AFTER PARTITION. SEIZED AFTER WAR. SAME BASIC POLICY LINE AS OBSERVER BUT EDITORIALS SLIGHTLY PRO-WESTERN AT TIMES.
4. ITS "DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT", MUFAZZAL HUSSAIN (WHO IS ALSO CITY EDITOR), IS BEST IN BD, WRITING FREQUENTLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ARTICLES ON SUBCONTINENTAL RELATIONS.

C. THE PEOPLE (INDEPENDENT)

1. 8,000.
2. PUBLISHER-EDITOR ABIDUR RAHMAN, 38, M.A. DACCA U., WEALTHY BUSINESSMAN-IMPORTER, STARTED PUBLISHING IN 1969 GIVING STRONG SUPPORT TO AL'S ANTI-PAKISTAN POLICY; PRESS DESTROYED BY PAK ARMY IN 1971 AS RAHMAN FLED TO INDIA. PUBLICATION RESUMED IN FEBRUARY 1972 AND POLICY HAS BECOME STRONGLY CRITICAL AL GOVERNMENT AND PRINTS FREQUENT FEATURES EXPOSING MALADMINISTRATION, CORRUPTION, ETC. COVERAGE OF OPPOSITION PARTIES IS BEST OF ENGLISH DAILIES. LOYALTY DURING WAR AND CONTINUING TIES WITH SOME INFLUENTIAL AL LEADERS ENABLE RAHMAN TO PURSUE CRITICAL LINE TO DATE WITHOUT JEOPARDY TO HIS PERSON OR ADVERTISING REVENUE. FOREIGN NEWS, EDITS, ARE ERRATIC; SOMETIMES BITTERLY ANTI-WESTERN, OCCASIONALLY REASONABLE. NO CONSISTENT PHILOSOPHY EVIDENT IN EITHER LOCAL OR FOREIGN SLANTING.

II. ENGLISH WEEKLIES

A. HOLIDAY (INDEPENDENT, MARXIST, VIRULENTLY ANTI-RUSSIAN AND INDIAN, HENCE SYMPATHETIC TO MAOIST LINE)

1. NOW UP TO 20,000.
2. PUBLISHER: ABUL KHAIR KHAN, 35, LAWYER, CLOSE FRIEND OF EDITOR ENAYETULLAH KHAN (NO KIN), 35, A.B. DACCA U. IN PHILOSOPHY, IVP GRANTEE (1972). PAPER IS FINANCED BY COMBINED VURSONAL RESOURCES OF ENAYETULLAH AND HIS WEALTHY WIFE.
3. ENAYETULLAH IS GREGARIOUS, OUTSPOKEN, CHARMING AND VERY APPROACHABLE MARXIST INTELLECTUAL WHO THOROUGHLY RELISHES THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DACCA 00995 01 OF 02 061404Z

CULTURAL AND MATERIAL DELIGHTS OF THE WESTERN WORLD AND GOES FIRST CLASS ALL THE WAY. PRE-WAR HOLIDAY (FOUNDED 1965) WAS AN UNOFFICIAL ORGAN OF NAP(B) UNTIL CLOSED DOWN BY PAK ARMY IN 1971. PUB RESUMED IN JANUARY 1972 ATTEMPTING MAINTAIN HIGH INTELLECTUAL-CRITICAL COVERAGE OF LOCAL AND INT'L NEWS. RAPIDLY SLIPPED INTO ANTI-REGIME POLEMICS AND BECAME INCREASINGLY MARXIST-MAOIST IN ANALYSIS, TERMINOLOGY. HOLIDAY FAVORITE AND MOST STIMULATING READING OF FOREIGN COMMUNITY AND BENGALIEE INTELLECTUALS AND STUDENTS.

PRINCIPAL VALUE IS ITS ANALYSES AND EXPOSURES OF GOV'T'S WEAKNESSES, PROBLEMS, "ERRORS", ETC. FOREIGN COVERAGE INEVITABLY "SUPER-PROGRESSIVE". HOWEVER ANTI-SOVIET-INDIAN INTERESTS OCCASIONALLY MAKE FOR PRO-US POSITIONS. KHAN IS PERSONALLY FOND OF AMERICA AND AMERICANS BUT HIS SOCIOLOGY IS THOROUGHLY FROM MARCUSE AND FANON. HOLIDAY CLOSED BY BDG IN SEPTEMBER 73 (DACCA 4428) BUT RESUMED PUBLICATION IN OCTOBER AFTER APOLOGY, FACE-TO-FACE CONFRONTATION WITH MUJIB, AND PROMISE TO BE LESS UNRESTRAINED IN HIS CRITICISM.

B. WAVE (INDEPENDENT, ERRATICALLY ANTI-WESTERN, SOMETIMES MARXIST IN TERMINOLOGY AND ANALYSIS YET CAPABLE OF SURPRISING AMBIVALENCE (SEE PARA 3 BELOW).

1. 8,000

2. OWNER-EDITOR: K.B.M. MAHMOOD, 36, A.B. JAGANNATH COLLEGE, DACCA.

3. FOUNDED AT KHULNA IN 1961 BY PRESENT OWNER; SUPPORTED MUSLIM LEAGUE AND AYUB KHAN REGIME; CEASED PUB. 1971. MAHMOOD'S BROTHER, ALI TAREK, JOINED TAJUDDIN AHMED, CURRENT FINANCE MINISTER, IN EXILE DURING WAR. THIS ASSOCIATION IS RUMORED TO HAVE RESULTED IN AL DONATING A PRINTING PRESS ANBHPREMISES TO MAHMOOD TO REVIVE WAVE AFTER WAR PRESUMABLY AS SUPPORT FOR TAJUDDIN CLIQUE. ANTI-GOVERNMENT TONE SOON DEVELOPED HOWEVER AND AL RE-POSSESSED PRESS IN OCTOBER 1973. PRESS LATER RETURNED, AGAIN RUMORED AS RESULT OF DECLINING BUT STILL CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE TAJUDDIN AND TAREK (WHO IS NOW FORMER'S PA). PUB RESUMED JANUARY 1974. CIRCULATION MEANWHILE HAS DOPPED FROM PREVIOUS HIGH OF 12,000. CONTENTS HEAVY ON "ANTI-IMPERIALISM, NEO-COLONIALISM" FEATURES BUT HAS SOME INTERESTING, SOPHISTICATED ANALYSES ON LOCAL SCENE, SUB-CONTINENTAL ISSUES, AND IS OCCASIONALLY CRITICAL OF USSR. RECENTLY PUBLISHED POWERFUL "GULAG ARCHIPELAGO" EXTRACT AND DATELINED IT MOSCOW*; ALSO IN-DEPTH, NOT UNSYMPATHETIC, "LETTER FROM JERUSALEM" ON ISRAEL'S CURRENT SITUATION. SUCH TREATMENTS VIRTUALLY TABOO IN ANY OTHER BD PAPER.

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PAGE 01 DACCA 00995 02 OF 02 060614Z

46

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C. FREEDOM (INDEPENDENT BUT SUPPORTS AL AND CLAIMS TO BE VOICE OF DEMOCRATIC, SECULAR SOCIALISM)

1. 2,000

2. FOUNDER: DR. T. HUSAIN, PRESENT SECRETARY TO HEALTH MINISTRY. EDITOR: MRS. PARVEEN HUSAIN (WIFE).

3. RAISON D'ETRE OF FREEDOM (FOUNDED 1970) SEEMS TO BE VEHICLE OF SELF-EXPRESSION OF FOUNDER WHO WRITES MANY ARTICLES ON MEDICAL PRACTICE AS WELL AS ON GENERAL POLITICAL-SOCIAL ISSUES. REGARDED AS HAVING SCANT INFLUENCE.

III. BENGALI DAILIES

A. ITTEFAQ (INDEPENDENT--MOST BALANCED, OBJECTIVE PAPER IN BANGLADESH)

1. 55,000 (LARGEST CIRCULATION IN BD)

2. A. PUBLISHER: MOINUL HOSSAIN, 40, LAWYER, AL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

2. B. EDITOR: ANWAR HOSSAIN, 35, YOUNGER BROTHER; HONORS GRAD DACCA U AND ONCE PROMINENT STUDENT LEADER; IVP GRANTEE (1972); VISITED EUROPE, FAR EAST. SON OF LATE AND NATIONALLY REVERED TOFAZZAL HOSSAIN, FOUNDING EDITOR.

3. FOUNDED IN 1954 AS STRONG SUPPORTER OF AL. PAPER SINCE INDEPENDENCE HAS BECOME HIGHLY CRITICAL OF REGIME BUT IN VERY RESPONSIBLE SENSE. EDITOR IS YOUNG MAN OF VISION, COURAGE, SINCERITY AND PROFESSIONALISM UNCOMMON IN BD JOURNALISM.

B. DAINIK BANGLA (GOVERNMENT ADMINISTERED)

1. 45,000

2. ADMINISTRATOR-EDITOR: NURUL ISLAM PATWARI, 47, A.B. DACCA U, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 DACCA 00995 02 OF 02 060614Z

RESPECTED, NON-CONTROVERSIAL, JOURNALIST.

3. PRE-WAR PAPER OF NAT'L PRESS TRUST (FOUNDED 1964 AS DAINIK-PAKISTAN BY PAKISTAN OBSERVER ORGANIZATION), SEIZED BY BDG IN 1971. STRAIGHT AL PARTY LINE ON ALL ISSUES. VERY SIMILAR TO OBSERVER.

C. PURPOBESH (GOVERNMENT ADMINSTERED)

1. 40,000

2. ADMINISTRATOR-EDITOR: EHTESHAM HAIDER CHOWDHURY, 47, A. B. DACCA U, 25 YEARS' EXPERIENCE WITH VARIOUS BENGALI DAILIES.

3. PURBODESH IS ALSO VIRTUAL BENGALI VERSION OF OBSERVER. FOUNDED IN 1969-ALSO BY PAKISTAN OBSERVER ORGANIZATION.

D. BANGLAR BANI (OFFICIAL ORGAN OF AWAMI JUBA LEAGUE)

1. 25,000

2. PUBLISHER-EDITOR: SHEIKH FAZUL HUQ MONI, NEPHEW OF PM AND CHAIRMAN OF AWAMI JUBA LEAGUE PRESIDUM. MONI, 35, A. B. DACCA, "STUDENT" LEADER, TRAVELS WIDELY IN BLOC COUNTRIES AND IS MUCH CULTIVATED BY USSR WHERE HE VISITED TWICE IN 1973; ALSO LED BD DELEGATION TO RECENT EAST BERLIN WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL. MONI

FOUNDED PAPER IN 1972 WITH AL MONEY.

3. HACK AL EULOGIES DOMINATE, WITH EMPHASIS ON YOUTH, STUDENT AFFAIRS; CLINGS MORE FIRMLY TO PRO-SOVIET, PRO-INDIAN POSITION THAN DOES CURRENT OFFICIAL AL LINE.

E. GANOKANTHA (OPPOSITION ORGAN OF MILITANT JSD)

1. 30,000

2. A. EDITOR: AL MAHMOOD, 42, HIGH SCHOOL ONLY, BENGALEE POET; EXTREMELY VOCAL ANTI-AMERICAN.

B. PUBLISHER: MONIRUL ISLAM, 39, FORMER STUDENT LEADER, A. B. DACCA U.

3. FOUNDED IN 1972; STEADY GROWTH TO PRESENT CIRCULATION (WAS 12,000 IN MID-73); HEAVILY CRITICAL OF AL REGIME WHICH MAY INHIBIT FURTHER GROWTH AS BDG CONTROLS NEWSPRINT QUOTAS. FORCED BY BDG TO VACATE ORIGINAL (ABANDONED) PRESS IN 1973; 25 ISSUES LOST BEFORE COMMERCIAL FIRM LOCATED WILLING TO PRINT. FOREIGN COVERAGE SPOTTY; "ANTI-IMPERIALIST" FEATURES AND EDITS BUT POLICY ON INT'L ISSUES ANTI-INDIAN AND USSR AS WELL AS ANTI-USA AND MAY BE DESCRIBED AS SOMEWHAT GENERALLY XENOPHOBIC REFLECTING ENGLISH MEANING OF JSD: "NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY".

F. JANOPAD (INDEPENDENT)

1. 10,000

2. A. OWNED BY THREE INFLUENTIAL AL MEMBERS: AL PRESIDENT KAMARUZZAMAN; MANSUR ALI, MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND HOME AFFAIRS; AND MATIUR RAHMAN, MINISTER LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DACCA 00995 02 OF 02 060614Z

B. EDITOR: ABDUL GAFFAR CHOWDHURY, 42, PROMINENT WRITER, COLUMNIST, A.B. DACCA U.

C. PUBLISHER: SYED HAIDER ALI, 47, A.B. DACCA U, FORMER BUSINESSMAN, NO PREVIOUS JOURNALISTIC EXPERIENCE BUT A PROTEGE OF KAMARUZZAMAN. FIRST ISSUE PUBLISHED JANUARY 1973.

3. NON-CONTROVERSIAL AL SUPPORTING ORGAN BUT TENDS TO BE MOST PRO-INDIAN OF BD PAPERS. RUMORS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM OWNER OF ANADA BAZAR PATRIKA, CALCUTTA DAILY.

G. SANGBAD (ORGAN OF NAP-M)

1. 20,000

2. OWNER-EDITOR: AHMEDUL KABIR, 50, HONORS GRAD ECONOMICS DACCA U; FORMER EAST PAKISTAN CIVIL SERVANT; ELECTED TO PRE-WAR EP PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY AS NAP CANDIDATE FOR 3 TERMS); JOINT-EDITOR IS ALI AKSAD, SEC-GEN ZUNGLADESH CHAPTER OF COMMUNIST-FRONT WORLD PEACE COUNCIL; PROBABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM USSR EMB.

3. PRE-WAR SANGBAD (FOUNDED 1950) WAS MUSLIM LEAGUE MOUTHPIECE, THEN OWNED AND EDITED BY KHAIRUL KABIR, OLDER BROTHER OF AHMEDUL, NOW A BANK EXECUTIVE. AFTER INDEPENDENCE PAPER SUPPORTED ALL OUT PRO-MOSCOW, PRO-INDIAN LINE, OF NAP MUZAFFAR GROUP. SINCE PEOPLE'S UNITED FRONT FORMED IN 1973 SANGBAD HAS SUPPORTED BDG BUT REMAINS STRONGLY PRO-USSR IN EDITS; MUCH USE OF TASS ITEMS.

H. AZAD (GOVERNMENT ADMINISTERED)

1. 15,000

2. ADMINISTRATOR-EDITOR: M. ANISUZZAMAN, 45, A. B.

DDACCA U, VETERAN AZAD EMPLOYEE.

3. OLDEST BENGALI DAILY IN DACCA (1947); ORIGINALLY MUSLIM
LEAGUE ORGAN; BDG SEIZED AFTER WAR; NOW OF POOR JOURNALISTIC
QUALITY IT IS RELATIVELY DULL AL MOUTHPIECE.
NEWBERRY

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